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U.S. ARMY MANEUVER SUPPORT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FT. LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI



PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
FORT LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI 65473
VOICE: 573-563-4145
FAX: 573.563-4012
BY: Marti Yoshida, Guidon assistant editor
EMAIL: martha.l.yoshida.civ@mail.mil

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Post Soldier awarded Purple Heart for combat injuries

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – A Fort Leonard Wood Soldier became the recipient of one of the nation's oldest combat medals Friday.

Sgt. Alan Ware was presented with the Purple Heart award, during a ceremony at the 787th Military Police Battalion headquarters.

In 2012, Ware, then a heavy equipment operator, was assigned to the 887th Engineer Support Company, 578th Engineer Battalion, 411th Engineer Brigade, for a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan.

“We deployed to conduct route clearance at Regional Command-East, Paktika province,” Ware explained.

“We were tasked with a mission to clear a route charge and did not anticipate many IED encounters,” he said. “Unfortunately we encountered several IEDs.”

The mission was expected to last eight hours, and ended up being a five-day mission, said the Charlottesville, Virginia, native.

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“On that mission, the vehicle had been hit (by an IED),” he said. “It didn’t damage the vehicle, but it picked it up and slammed it, and we had to take two (of the three) members of that crew out. I ended up filling in as a driver, when we had one go off on the truck that I was driving at the time.”

Ware’s vehicle was struck by an IED on July 16, 2012, resulting in his injuries.

“After that, I was MEDEVACed out to Sharana, then Bagram airfield,” he said.

His two other crew members survived, Ware added.

Ware said one of the toughest parts was not having contact with his wife.

“I talked to her often — daily,” he said. “With being flown up to Bagram, I didn’t have any contact with her for over a week.”

Ware’s wife, Lindsie, said, “He was on a mission, and I knew he was on a mission. I was supposed to hear from him, and I didn’t.”

It was pretty tough on her, Ware said.

Lindsie said it was a big relief when they were finally able to talk.

“Other spouses hadn’t heard from their Soldiers,” Lindsie reflected. “Until the time I heard from him, it was difficult.”

Brig. Gen. Kent Savre, Maneuver Support Center of Excellence and Fort Leonard Wood commanding general, who presented the award to Ware, said, “When there’s a maneuver commander accomplishing a mission on behalf of our nation, at the heart of mission success is a Soldier or leader who came right here from Fort Leonard Wood.”

“Back in 2010, coming out of Virginia, Alan Ware, came here as an engineer Soldier and went through his basic training and AIT (Advanced Individual Training) and became commissioned as an equipment operator,” Savre said.

“He went to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and joined the 101st Airborne Division and was with the engineers in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team. Then, he deployed to Afghanistan and performed route clearance, making sure there were no IEDs on the roads, so that maneuver commanders can execute the mission.

“Sgt. Ware was out on route clearance patrol on July 16, 2012 and got hit by an IED. He was wounded and MEDEVACed,” Savre said.

“The Purple Heart is not one of those awards you try to achieve,” Savre continued. “It’s one of the most honored awards that we have in our Army, because it shows the sacrifice that we’re willing to make. We’re willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, and short of that, to be wounded in combat, and do whatever our nation asks us to do.”

Immediately following the ceremony, Ware participated in his second AIT graduation — this time with the 701st Military Police Battalion, 14th Military Police Brigade.

Ware is reclassifying to become a military policeman and bound for an assignment to Camp Humphrey, Korea, next year after he completes training here.

At Camp Humphrey, Ware will conduct confinement operations. “It is one of the most critical missions that we do, especially in forward places like Korea — to ensure that the maneuver commander can be successful, Savre said and added, “He’s going to be at the heart of mission success there as well.”

To reclassify to a new military occupational specialty, Ware, who has been in the Army nearly five years, spent seven weeks of AIT with more than 40 initial entry training Soldiers.

Ware said the training was a good reminder of what it was like when he first came into the Army.

“It’s a double-edged sword to receive the Purple Heart,” Ware said. “It’s an honor, but it’s something nobody wants to wear. It’s a reminder to everyone else of the sacrifice that we all pay who wear this uniform.”

“It’s all about the greater cause. It’s not about me,” he added. “It’s about contributing to keep our Families and friends safe.”

The Purple Heart, originally established by Gen. George Washington in 1782 as the Badge of Military Merit, is issued to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy.

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For more information, contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at 573.563.4145

Encl.: Photo

Photo outline: Sgt. Alan Ware receives his Purple Heart from Brig. Gen. Kent Savre, Maneuver Support Center of Excellence and Fort Leonard Wood commanding general.

About Fort Leonard Wood

Fort Leonard Wood is a thriving and prosperous installation that has evolved from a small basic training post 70 years ago to a premier Army Center of Excellence that trains about 80,000 military and civilians each year.

Home to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood now trains and educates service members and develops doctrine and capabilities for the Training and Doctrine Command's U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School, U.S. Army Engineer School, and U.S. Army Military Police School, three gender integrated Initial Military Training brigades, and the Army's largest Noncommissioned Officers Academy.

Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting a colonel-commanded Marine Corps Detachment and an Air Force Detachment, which are both the largest on any Army installation, are located on Fort Leonard Wood; a large Navy Seabee Detachment and elements of the Coast Guard train here as well.
